The Middle Ages

The theater created in the Middle Ages, also known as the medieval period, stretched from approximately 500 to 1500. B.C.E. The theatrical performances stage during this period were quite different from the theatrical performances staged in Rome. In the absence a powerful monarch or government to stabilize trade and daily life, the church took over many other functions of leadership. Because the church was so powerful and because so few people could read the scriptures for themselves, theatre became a way to communicate religious messages to the general public in a clear and powerful way.

Most plays performed in the middle Ages told stories from the Bible. Often several stories were performed one right after the other, in what became known as a cycle plays. An example of such a cycle is the Wakefield cycle staged in Wakefield England which consisted of 32 plays the 13th play in this cycle the second Sheppard’s play is considered one of the best English cycle plays. the cycle place were often referred to as mystery plays because they focused on the mysterious nature of God's power these plays dramatize Biblical events spanning the period from the creation in the book of Genesis to the last judgment. In the book of revelations, for example, The Mystery of Adam tells stories Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel and the prophets to foreshadow the coming of Christ. Although the place at this period focus on man’s proper response to God, as the period passed the church began to modify the content up the place these new a place known as morality plays. Attempt to teach a moral lesson to the audience to the use of allegorical symbolic characters. For example character in a morality play may have represented all of mankind or a particular ice or virtues such as Creed anger or mercy. The main character often called everyman or mankind was typically tempted by evil but returned to the side good in the end. the place for percent it very differently from the way the Roman said stage their place staged in the church itself or in the churchyard around the church building or in the street the setting customarily comprises a series of several small temporary hut like houses each one decorated differently to represent a different location. These were called mansions. Although all the mansions were visible to the audience at once, each of the mansions faced a common shared playing space in front of a row of mansions was an area called the plateau? This space served as the central acting area for all of the locations. The audience would accept at the space was changing based upon which mansion the actors entered.

Although they were of minor importance compared to the religious and morality plays, two other forms of theater, farce and interlude, were popular in the middle Ages. Farce was a form of coincidence that originated in the 1200, emphasizing some of society's more ridiculous behaviors. The interludes were comic place that served as short breaks between different parts other celebrations.